

REMARKS

The Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended by the Examiner during the telephone interview on December 21, 2006. To summarize, the Applicants' attorney and the Examiner discussed the Howard patent and the fact that its tufts terminate in a common plane, whereas the Applicants' bristle bundles terminate in different planes, as shown for example in Figs. 10 and 11a. The Applicants' attorney agreed to provide a new set of claims clarifying this distinction for the Examiner's consideration. Consequently, the Applicants have submitted new claims 21-25, as will be discussed more completely below.

In light of the Examiner's previous indication that claims 7 and 8 contain allowable subject matter, the Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitation of claim 7 and those claims from which it depends, namely claims 4 and 5. In light of this amendment, claims 4, 5, and 7 have been canceled, and claims 6 and 8 have been amended to depend from claim 1. The Applicants believe that this amendment places claims 1-3, 6, and 8-13 in condition for allowance. Also, to move this application more quickly to allowance and reduce the number of issues for appeal, the Applicants have rewritten claim 14 in dependent form, depending from claim 1, and canceled claims 15-18. Claims 19 and 20 have been amended to depend from newly-submitted claim 21. The Applicants believe that these claims are allowable for the reasons stated with respect to claim 21 below.

New claim 21 claims a cleaning device having a brush assembly that includes a plurality of bundles, where each bundle includes at least one pliable element for contacting the surface to be cleaned. The bundles are arranged in two sets, where the second set is located inward of the first set. The bundles within these two sets are distinguished from those shown in Howard because they have different heights. Support for this claim may be found in the embodiments depicted in Figs. 10 and 11a and in the specification on page 8, lines 15-25; page 9, lines 8-12 and 23-25; and page 11, lines 6-10.

Claims 22 and 23 are directed to the specific embodiments shown, respectively, in Figs. 10 and 11a. In particular, claim 22 specifies that the bundles of the first set are arranged in an outer ring, and the bundles of the second set are arranged in the inner ring where the inner ring bundles are shorter than those of the outer ring. Support for this claim may be found in Fig. 10 and on page 8, lines 15-25. Claim 23 is directed to the embodiment

depicted in Fig. 11a and adds the limitation that the first set and second set of bundles are each arranged in a pair of parallel rows projecting downward from a support member on said base, where the second set of bundles are located inward of the first set. This claim requires that the first set of bundles be longer than the second set of bundles relative to the support member, as described on page 11, lines 6-10.

New claim 24 adds the limitation that an opening be provided between the first and second set of bundles for providing liquid to the surface to be cleaned, as previously described in claim 14.

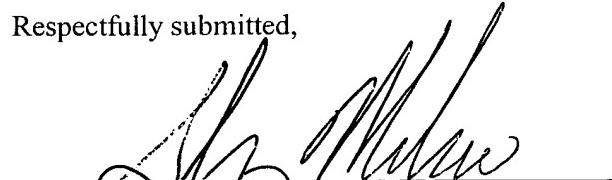
Similarly, claim 25 adds the limitation that the pliable element includes a plurality of bristles as in claim 10. Claims 24 and 25 were added to preserve the scope of the invention and are believed to be allowable based on their dependency from claim 21.

While the difference in height described in the claims is discussed in the specification and is clearly shown in Figs. 10 and 11a, the Applicants believe that it would be helpful to amend the specification to make clear how the height and length of the brushes in the embodiments respectively shown in Figs. 10 and 11a were measured. To that end, the specification on page 9, line 23, after the number 350 has been amended to indicate that the height is measured relative to the cleaning surface in this embodiment. This same recitation is made in claim 22. In the embodiment depicted in Fig. 11a and described on page 11 of the specification, consistent with the description contained therein, on line 6 after the number "423", the length of the bundle is described as being "relative to the support member 418." Claim 23, which is directed to this embodiment, contains the same recitation. Support for amendments to the specification may be found in the drawings, namely Figs. 10 and 11a, and from the context of the description contained respectively on pages 9 and 11. Therefore, the Applicants believe that no new matter has been added.

Overall, the Applicants believe that new claim 21 and those that depend from it are distinguished from the applied patents in that the Applicants' claimed invention includes at least a first set and a second set of bundles, where the first set and second set of bundles have different heights. The Applicants believe that these claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request entry of the same for purposes of placing the application

in condition for allowance or alternatively to place the claims in better condition for discussion on appeal.

Respectfully submitted,



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